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## **Environment Department Makes \$1 Million Available for Watershed Protection Efforts**

(Santa Fe, NM) — In an effort to help prevent pollution from entering New Mexico waterways, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) will be distributing approximately \$1 million in funding in the coming months to local governments, non-governmental groups and private citizens. These funds will be used to undertake projects that fight nonpoint source pollution, that is pollution attributed to runoff or other sources that cannot be traced to a single point of origin. These funds come from the federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h).

In recent years projects undertaken with this funding have included efforts to protect and restore the Animas and San Juan Rivers in Northwestern New Mexico, the Gallinas River in Northern New Mexico, and Mangas Creek in the Southwest.

"I'm proud that NMED is helping these communities protect their rivers and streams," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "These grassroots efforts have a profound impact all across the state."

To announce this drive and help solicit applications for project funding, the Department will hold three public meetings in the coming weeks. The public meetings to be held as follows:

**Taos, September 8**, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center, 202 Chamisa Rd

**Silver City, September 9**, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, at the City Hall Annex Conference Rm., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor in the Bank of America Bldg. on the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Hudson.

**Las Vegas, September 14**, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Highlands University, Sininger Hall, Rm. 201, across the court from Donnelly Library.

This year, NMED intends to focus the projects in areas that contain stream segments with approved Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants or where a TMDL will be written within the next year. This will allow for the efforts to have measurable results on a waterbody where NMED has noted a need for improvement.

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A TMDL is a watershed budget for pollutant influx to a watercourse. TMDLs are developed by the Department with the cooperation of local water users and citizens. These planning documents provide pollution reduction targets and guidance on how to reduce pollutant loads.

NMED will issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for these projects on August 30, 2004. These RFPs will be available at [www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb) or by request.

The RFPs are separated into two initiatives. One RFP will fund the creation of watershed groups that will address TMDLs in the future. A second RFP will provide financial support for established watershed groups that are ready to implement on-the-ground projects to address TMDLs. All governmental, non-governmental, or private citizens are encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Julie Arvidson at (505) 476-3069 ([julie\\_arvidson@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:julie_arvidson@nmenv.state.nm.us)) or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director at (505) 827-0314.

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